(b) the coverage of each channel; and

(c) the number of channels in operation for N.R.Is?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (c) Doordarshan operates two terrestrial networks viz. DD-I and DD-II. The terrestrial reach of DD-I is 74.8% of the Geographical area and 87.9% of the population in India. The DD-II service is presently available in approximately sixty cities and adjoining areas. Doordarshan also operates eleven regional language channels, one Sports channel and one News channel which can be received through dish antenna/cable network throughout the country. There is one exclusive satellite channel tagetted for viewers outside India.

Termination of Services of Prasar Bharati Board Members

1912. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have recently terminated the services of two Prasar Bharati Board members;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore; and

(c) whether it is not a fact that by doing so Government are trying to dispense with plurality of views, the essential sprit of Prasar Bharati?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (c) Sub-section 3 of Section 6 of the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990 provides that term of office of part-time Members shall be six years but one-third of such Members shall retire on the expiration of every second year. Sub-section 5 of Section 6 empowers the President to make such provisions as he thinks fit for curtailing the term of office of some of

the part-time Members in order that one-third of them shall retire every second year. In order to meet the legal requirement of these provisions term of office of two part-time Members, namely, Prof. U.R. Rao and Dr. Abid Hussain has been curtailed from 6 years to 4 years. The term of office of another two part-time Members namely Prof. Romila Thapar and Shri Rajendra Yadav has been curtailed from 6 years to 2 years. This, in no way, affects the plurality of views which Prasar Bharati is expected to project as a broadcaster.

Setting up of Independent Broadcasting Authority

†1913. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Independent broadcast authority" published in the Daily Observer, dated 18th November, 1999;

(b) whether it is a fact that a problem is being created in India by various private broadcasting media;

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction in this regard; and

(d) whether Government contemplate setting up of an independent broadcasting authority?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) To deal all these issues a Broadcast law is under consideration.

(d) Yes, Sir.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.